

2777

JPRS: 2777

3 June 1960

TRANSLATIONS OF JEN-MIN JIH-PAO

ARTICLES ON EDUCATION

- COMMUNIST CHINA -

DTIC QUALITY INSPECTED 2

RETURN TO MAIN FILE

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A

Approved for public release;  
Distribution Unlimited

Photocopies of this report may be purchased from:

PHOTODUPLICATION SERVICE

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

U.S. JOINT PUBLICATIONS RESEARCH SERVICE  
205 EAST 42nd STREET, SUITE 300  
NEW YORK 17, N. Y.

19980108 090

JPRS: 2777

CSO: 4112-N

TRANSLATIONS OF JEN-MIN JIH-PAO ARTICLES  
ON EDUCATION

[The following are full translations of three selected  
articles in Jen-min Jih-pao, Peiping, 14 April 1960.]

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Article</u>	<u>Page</u>
THE PHONETIC ALPHABET AND THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION .....	1
DEVELOP THE CHILDREN TO TAKE THEIR TURNS IN THE RANKS OF COMMUNISM .....	11
MIDDLE AND PRIMARY SCHOOL TEXTBOOKS MUST BE REFORMED .....	23

THE PHONETIC ALPHABET AND THE  
CULTURAL REVOLUTION

[ The following is a full translation of the speech by LI Chin-hsi to the Second Session of the Second National People's Congress of Communist China, in Peiping in April 1960, as carried in Jen-min Jih-pao, Peiping, 14 April 1960, page 12.]

Deputies:

I fully endorse the reports of Vice Premiers Li Fu-chun, Li Hsien-nien and T'an Chen-lin.

Under the correct leadership of the Party, workers for the reform of our language are joining the broad masses in the participation in "the struggle for the reform of tools and the improvement of operational methods", within the scope of education, and striving to guarantee that educational, scientific and cultural enterprises will "better coordinate with and promote the big leap forward in industrial and agricultural production."

In his speech on "Learning Characters with Phonetic Aid is an Effective Weapon to Accelerate the Acquisition of Knowledge by Workers and Peasants," Deputy Li Hui gave an overall account of the experiences and gigantic achievements in the promotion of the use of phonetics for the study of characters in Wa-jung Hsien, Shansi.

In his speech on "The Han Language Phoneticization Program is an Effective Weapon of the Cultural Revolution," Deputy Hu Yu-

chih has reported conditions he witnessed during his visit to four hsien, one municipality and more than ten people's communes and administrative areas in Chin-nan Special Administrative District, Shansi, in connection with the use of the phonetic alphabet for the elimination of illiteracy and the promotion of "pu-tung-hua" /Mandarin/.

I do not propose to repeat these two speeches, but merely to set down here my personal views.

The important development was the adoption by the Fifth Session of the First National People's Congress in February 1958 of the Program for the Phonetization of the Han Language. This program was the general summarization of the efforts of the Chinese people in the creation of a phonetic alphabet for the Han language over the past 60 years. In many localities, the Program has been used for two years as the tool to overcome difficulties in the study of the Han language. By now, the achievements are reflected in the following situations:

First, the rural areas has witnessed a scarcity in the supply of books. In Wan-jung Hsien alone, during the past four or five months, 374,000 books of reading material with phonetic aids were sold. Each time a new shipment of books arrived, the peasants queued up to buy them up. This was historically unprecedented. Visitors were stimulated into remarking, "This only is truly the elimination of illiteracy."

Second, in the lower grades of the primary school, the younger brothers teach their elder brothers. This is not a

situation which applies only to individual cases. When a child who had studied the phonetic alphabet during the first term reaches the second term, he is able to read new characters with the aid of the phonetic alphabet, and of course when the text is fully phoneticized. The elder brother who is in a higher grade had not learned the phonetic alphabet and is necessarily checked by every new character he comes upon. Accordingly, if we are planning the shortening of the primary school course from six years to four years, no problems should arise over the language course so long as we reform the text books.

Just as in the case of technical reform and the technological revolution, in the cultural revolution our concrete task lies in everybody "participating in the struggle for the reform of tools and improvement of operational methods, combining practical efforts, diligent efforts and skillful efforts." For many years we have been confronted with the fact that the Han characters are difficult to master, and we all have wanted to overcome the difficulty through educational tools and methods. Today, under the correct leadership of the Party, just as in the technical reform and technological revolution on other fronts, before us there have emerged many alarming achievements. Let me borrow two slogans from language reform work in the past, and give a not very "artful" interpretation of the term "skillful effort". It is: "Read the books first, identify the characters later." This refers to reading. As to writing, let us "forget the character, and write the sound."

When we say "read the book first and identify the characters later," we mean that we should first read the first column in the phonetized reading materials and then gradually identify the Han characters in the next column against the phonetic letters. We do not have to wait for the acquisition of a knowledge of two to three thousand Han characters before we start reading books. Nor do we suggest that reading and the identification of the characters be divided into two stages for study, one after the other. In practice, the student gets gradually acquainted with the Han characters in his phonetic textbook, and the more he is familiar with them, the greater is his acquaintance with them. Of course, under present environments, he meets with the Han characters everywhere.

The campaign for the elimination of illiteracy is developed principally among adults. As Deputy Mao Yi-sheng stated in his speech on the "Technical Reform of Sparetime Education," the illiterates in general are not completely culturally blind, but only "character-blind." Accordingly, we only need phonetic reading material which relegates the "characters" to a secondary position. We read according to the sound given, "the sound enters our ears and we register it in the mind." The masses of workers and peasants urgently seek knowledge, and it is natural that there should occur such episodes as seen in Wan-jung where the peasants queued up to buy books and borrow books.

As to primary school children, at the lower grades, we may

also develop vigorously among them the reading of phonetic materials. The children very actively want to read. They have spent over a month to study the phonetic alphabet. Inside their satchels are not only their textbooks, but also a few phonetic books. They complain that when they go to buy books with their mothers, they find they had read them all. They ask the teacher why more books are not published.

The "phonetic books" the children read have extensive contents which often exceeded the scope covered in their textbooks. There is scientific knowledge, and there is also revolutionary history. These not only promote the growth of their knowledge, but also rapidly increase their capacity for reading so long as we do not demand that they learn the Han characters. However, as they read more "phonetic books", they also have more opportunities to get into contact with the Han characters. Those characters they have studied in the class room, with repeated contact, become more deeply entrenched in their minds. They have a better understanding of the meanings. As to those characters not studied in the textbooks, the phonetics help them to understand a little and repeated contacts will add to their knowledge. So these children also sing in praise, "Once we master the phonetic alphabet, our knowledge of Han characters increases day after day."

If we are to reform our official normal educational system, and reduce the term of the primary school, the language course

provides the key subject for the reform of the curricula. The first book of the Experimental Language Reader used in the lower primary schools in Peiping Municipality contains only 202 new words. After completing the eight readers in four years, when a child is already 11 or 12, he will still have acquired only a knowledge of about 2,200 characters, still more than 1,000 short of the 3,500 Han characters in general usage.

If we are to carry out the reform of the textbooks, my view is as follows. The first book of the Language Reader will include the more than 390 characters which have been chosen to serve as the standard sounds of the alphabetization program and these words should be appropriately written into texts to be taught. Let the children get acquainted with them, and from then onward, whenever they take up a phonetic textbook or any other phonetic reading material, they are familiar with the first column, and this should lay firm the foundation of language study. The language readers which have been prepared with the primary goal of making the student learn the characters may now be reformed and developed into readers with the goal of promoting the language study of the children and enriching their general knowledge. These textbooks are not suppressed, they are not turned into backward materials.

As to "forgetting the character, but just writing the sound," we mean that when we write something, and sometimes we cannot reproduce a character, we just forget the thing and use the phonetic alphabet as substitute. This should be an acceptable condition,



though we must be careful to use the Peiping pronunciation, and not adopt native dialects at random, to achieve national unanimity so that the written thing can be read everywhere, to prevent the diversification of the Han language. In other words, the popularization of pu tung-hua and the unification of pronunciation is precisely the prerequisite to "forgetting the character but writing down the sound."

Accordingly we find that in the illiteracy elimination campaign in Wan-jung, because the reading of phonetic materials promoted the urge to writing, the rural poets and chiefs of the production teams took up their pens and started writing. When they came upon words the Han characters for which they could not write, so long as their trend of thought was not interrupted, they were not restricted by the handicap, and used the phonetic alphabet as the substitute for the Han characters. When they had finished the composition in hand, they would look up the dictionary and put in the Han characters that had eluded them at first.

The primary school children, too, from the beginning of their study in Grade I, are able to use the phonetic alphabet for the writing of short sentences and even short compositions. They are also permitted to use the phonetic alphabet in writing longer letters of application for admission to the /Young Pioneer/ Corps.

All this is merely a preliminary step in the training of writing, and we cannot say that we are introducing a new written language. On this point, I do not wish to elaborate at the present stage just yet.

For the past 60 years the Chinese people have worked for the creation of a Han phonetic alphabet, and this work has been summarized in the Phonetization Program we adopted in 1958. For the past 60 years the Chinese people have placed their hope in a phonetic alphabet to overcome difficulties in the study of the Han characters in order to raise their cultural and technical levels, and their hopes have also been "realized" with the current big leap forward in socialist construction.

(This year is the year Kang-tzu according to the lunar calendar. Sixty years ago, also in the Kang-tzu year, one Wang Chao created the system of "Mandarin sound symbols" which gained considerable circulation. His consciousness still belonged to that of the feudal society. But technically, his work was consistent with the principle of "reading the book first, identifying the characters later; forget the character, write out the sound.")

To do the job properly, workers in language reform must realize their need to negotiate "three hurdles." The first is the "leadership hurdle." Politics must assume command, /Party/ secretaries in various localities must personally assume leadership, the whole Party must take part in the task, all the people must be mobilized for it. Understanding of the task must be unified, the direction to follow must be clarified, and the study of the phonetic alphabet must be combined with production, that is to say, production must lead study, and study must in turn promote production. In this way success cannot but be assured.

The second is the "hurdle of teachers." According to the

experience of the Tung-fang-hung Textile Works, an experimental point in Hupeh Province for the elimination of illiteracy with the promotion of the phonetic alphabet, there was an erroneous view which held that teachers engaged in wiping out illiteracy with the use of the phonetic alphabet must have a knowledge of phonetics and could speak the pu-tung-hua correctly and fluently. In face this view is divorced from realities. In the case of this project, only one teacher in the key class of the experiment had received training in a short term course. All the other teachers were staff members and workers of the plant, and they had only studied the phonetic alphabet for three days. They first served as auxiliary guides, and later became full fledged teachers and they did their job very well.

Today, in such places as the provinces of Fukien and Shantung, and in Wan-jung Hsien in Szechwan, in the training of teachers for the masses, large numbers are being made to master the phonetic alphabet at a very high speed, consistent with the policy of "using the people to teach the people, and the talented are made teachers," while at the same time vigorous efforts are made to gradually raise the quality of teaching. So the second hurdle is also not difficult to negotiate.

The third is the "hurdle of phonetic reading material." This is for the moment a very urgent problem. We must devise all ways and means to undertake the timely and full supply of such materials.

In a word, under the correct leadership of the Party, the reform of our language serves the cultural revolution, technical reform and the technological revolution. It participates in the struggle for the renovation of tools and the improvement of techniques. Its goal is to guarantee that educational, scientific and cultural enterprises will better coordinate with and promote the big leap forward in industrial and agricultural production.

DEVELOP THE CHILDREN TO TAKE THEIR TURN  
IN THE RANKS OF COMMUNISM

[The following is a full translation of a speech by T' IEN Hsiu-chuan to the Second Session of the Second National People's Congress in Communist China, as published in Jen-min Jih-pao, Peiping, 14 April 1960, page 11.]

Mr. Chairman, Deputies:

I fully support the reports by Vice Premiers Li Fu-chun, Li Hsien-nien and T'an Chen-lin. I now express some views on the further development and elevation of the work in the protection and education of children before the school age.

Glorious and happy are the children who grow up in the great age of Mao Tse-tung and receive the utmost attention of the Party and the state. With the development of socialist construction after victory of the socialist revolution, there has also been great development in the work of the protection and education of children. Particularly since 1958, under the illumination of the general line for socialist construction, in the wake of the big leap forward in industrial and agricultural production and the great victory of the people's communes, child protection and education enterprises have developed extensively and universally at unprecedented scales and speed.

After a year and more of overhauling and consolidation efforts, the quality of work among children has been greatly raised. Everywhere we come upon advanced nurseries which give satisfaction.

The nurses and teachers serve the children wholeheartedly, striving to achieve the state in which "auntie is comparable to mama." The children who are brought up collectively are assured of good food, good recreation, good rest, and good physique. They sing and dance, have manners, take to cleanliness, love collective life, love labor, and show even greater respect and love for their parents. Everywhere we find a situation in which the children are happy, the parents are satisfied, society is full of praise for the work done, and the nursing and educating staff are mentally uplifted.

Today we are carrying out the socialist revolution to its very end, building socialism at a high speed, and actively preparing conditions for the future transition to communism. In the face of such a colossal historical task, one of the important jobs in our construction program is the continued implementation of the policy for the protection and education of our children with major emphasis on social education, so as to further develop and greatly elevate the children protection and education enterprises.

At present, it is estimated that China has about 150 million children under the age of seven. These children are the people who will take their turn in the ranks of Communism. We hope that they all will have a strong physique, a high-degree Communist awakening, and a high-degree cultural and scientific knowledge so that they may become the builders and defenders of the Communist cause, and

and heroes in the reform of nature and conquest of the universe. It is therefore necessary that from the days of their infancy, they should regularly train themselves, strengthen their physical constitution, and cultivate the lofty moral codes of loving the people, loving labor, loving science, and loving and protecting public property. They should achieve healthy development both physically and mentally.

At the same time, on the basis of the needs of the sustained big leap forward in industrial and agricultural production and the urgent demands of the broad masses of women, we have to bring forward the demand for a greater development of the enterprises for the protection and education of children, and raise their tasks to a higher level.

As we all know, the women in rural China have been built into a major force in agricultural production. The number of women workers in factories, mines and other enterprises has increased from 600,000 during the early stage of the liberation to more than 8 million today. Large groups of housewives in the cities have participated in production and they have become the major force in the state-operated industrial undertakings. In 1960, as we bring into existence the high tide of overall organized production and overall organized living in the cities, a further large number of women will take up posts in social labor.

The overwhelming majority of these women are youths and adults,

and have children. We must therefore solve for them the problem of the children's protection and education, if they are to concentrate their energy on labor, on political, cultural and scientific studies, so that they may achieve, like the men, dual leap forward in production and study, and gradually climb the peaks of science and culture, and make greater contributions to socialist construction.

Today the rural people's communes have been further consolidated, and developed. The cities throughout the country are vigorously developing their own people's communes to promote overall organized production. A new high tide has emerged on a greater scope in the mass movement for overall organized living. Under such a favorable situation, it is appropriate that we bring forward the urgent demand for the further implementation of the policy stressing social education, for the overall organization of children before school age. Moreover, with the development of national economy and culture, we have also the material foundation for the further elevation and development of the

In accordance with the spirit of combining elevation with universalization, and under the leadership of the Communist Party committees at different levels, all areas in the country are promoting children's protection and education enterprises on a nation-wide scope. There are enterprises operated by the state, operated by people's communes, operated by streets, operated by



factories and other enterprises, operated by government organs, and operated by schools. There are enterprises operated by a single unit and others jointly operated by several units. Generally speaking, everybody takes a hand, and contributes efforts to have all children of pre-school age organized in stages and in groups, as rapidly as possible.

With reference to the scope and form of the enterprises, practical needs are taken into consideration, while long range interests are not ignored. On the basis of actual conditions and needs, children are cared for all the time, only during the day, only during the night, for half a day, or just temporarily. All these forms of child care are carried out simultaneously, and there is also the combination of large, medium size and small enterprises.

In the spirit of the uninterrupted revolution, many areas are building up networks or groups of these nurseries and other organizations for the care of children. In some areas in Szechwan, Honan and Heilungkiang, the maternity hospitals, nurseries and kindergartens are organized into entities, to assume complete responsibility for the protection of women and children and the education of children of pre-school age. In other areas the services rendered by nurseries and kindergartens are centralized under unified control on the principle of division of labor and specialization of trades, and there are operated children's messhalls, children's rest homes, toy shops, children's bathhouses, and tailoring and laundry establishments for children. In this way, management is

further facilitated, and the quality of the tasks in hand is further raised.

These new activities are being introduced and developed in quantity, and they need the support and popularization of all quarters, so that they may be more perfect and they may play a greater role. With these protective and educational enterprises going through such a great development and elevation, the raising of the quality of workers in the field has become an extremely important task. We are called upon to be more ambitious, to be more resolute, and to work for the elevation of workers in the field of the protection and education of children to a satisfactory level of redness and expertness within a not too long period of time.

In other words, we must gradually make all teachers in these establishments attain the level of graduates of junior normal schools and the nurses in these establishments attain the level of certified nurses. Why is it necessary? Because a teacher with the level of a junior normal school graduate will do better in training children of pre-school age in Communist thinking, giving them scientific education and preparing them for admission into regular schools. And a nurse with the requisite qualifications will the better take care of the health protection work in the nursery and raise its levels. The care of children under three should particularly be made the key task in the nurseries, because they are the youngest and need greater

care as can only be given by qualified nurses.

So we are definitely not being satisfied with what we have already organized, though we have established a preliminary foundation and achieved some initial results. We must be farsighted and continually strive for higher levels so that our enterprises will be more efficient and will move forward continually. This calls on all relevant quarters to take positive action, to develop the Communist spirit of cooperation, and to formulate plans for the training of workers having in mind the different levels attained by the workers we have today.

In the training of personnel, we must thoroughly implement the policy of walking on two legs. At present different areas are operating and developing normal schools for kindergarten children of lower, medium and higher levels, and schools for nurses, to train specialized talent. Such long range planning is very necessary. We believe that with the efforts jointly exerted by relevant quarters, these schools will be increased and improved, to become bases for the ceaseless training of protection and teaching personnel. At the same time, experiences have proved that another leg needed in the training of protection and teaching personnel is to use of auxiliary guidance methods, such as working alongside studying, self improvement efforts, short term training courses, sparetime studies, and visits to training centers, comparison and evaluation of work, and exhibitions and emulations.

Since 1958, the two legs have been coordinated very closely,

and we have been filled with confidence that in the future we shall all the more adhere to the use of two legs in walking, and rapidly build up a strong force of workers in the protection and education of children.

Universalization and elevation are mutually related, and they are the two sides of one problem. Neither is isolated. Chairman Mao has taught us to use both hands in working. We realize that this is no exception in work among children. We must use one hand to attend to universalization, and the other hand to attend to elevation. As we work for universalization, we also work for elevation at the same time. We must continually universalize and continually elevate. At the same time we also use one hand to attend to universalization and elevation at the present juncture, and the other hand to attend to the further elevation of scientific levels in the future. Walking on two legs, as applied to the fostering of personnel for the protection and education of children, is precisely an important concrete measure for the present and for the future.

To realize the great development, the great elevation of the protection and education enterprises of the children, basically we must adhere to letting politics assume command, resolutely listen to the words of Chairman Mao and the Party, resolutely serve production, serve the masses, and serve the proletarian political situation, and at the same time adhere to the mass line and rely on the strength of the masses. We must adopt the method of the

mass movement, take into account expediencies of local conditions and expediencies of time, start from scratch, develop from small to large proportions, rise from the lower to the higher levels, and progress from simplicity to perfection. From beginning to end we implement the spirit of working with diligence and thrift. This is the sole and correct road to the development of protection and educational enterprises with the achievement of quantity, speed, quality and economy. In the past we followed this course, and in the future we must continue to march along this course.

We are very happy to see that in the eyes of the Chinese people, the protection and education of children has become a lofty enterprise. China today has about six million workers in this field. The overwhelming majority of these workers are completely loyal, actively responsible and earnestly striving to press forward. They have overcome all kinds of difficulties, accepted the task of teaching and bringing up the children. They let the parents enjoy ease, and they themselves retain the difficulties. They serve the children to the extent of even forgetting their own rest and food, developing to a high degree the Communist spirit of mother love.

At the moment, workers in the protection and education of children in urban and rural areas throughout the country are developing with great fanfare the patriotic health movement in the nurseries and kindergartens. They are struggling for the elimination of disease, exerting tireless efforts for the

promotion of the children's health and the prevention of disease.

At the same time, they are also developing extensively the movement for technical reform and the technological revolution, greatly reducing physical labor, economizing time and raising labor productivity. The physical exertion of workers in the children's enterprises is being reduced, so that they may have time for study and rest, and combine more efficiently labor with leisure.

At present the movement is not well balanced, and continued efforts are needed for its further penetrating development. In the course of the movement, we must naturally meet with the struggle between advanced ideology and conservative thinking, and the struggle between the principle of uninterrupted revolution and the feeling of satisfaction with the status quo. We hope that all those working in this field will stand on the very forefront of the ranks for uninterrupted revolution, become members of the group for progress, and become members of the reform group, so that the enterprises for children may be operated in greater quantity, with greater speed, with better quality and with greater economy.

Of course, another important guarantee for the development and elevation of the enterprises for children is to be found in the support and concern shown them by the parents, especially the mothers.

Enterprises for children have received the greatest concern and support from our Party and our state, and all sections of society are also attaching importance to them. They are productive enterprises and at the same time welfare enterprises. They are educational enterprises and at the same time health protection enterprises. They concern both socialist construction at present and the realization of Communism in the future. They benefit both the children and the grown-up, especially women. Accordingly, under the unified leadership of the Party, all relevant quarters are developing the Communist spirit, vigorously promoting cooperation to run these enterprises together in a proper manner.

Recently, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education have been studying and formulating plans for the training of personnel for these enterprises. Factories, mines, enterprises, rural and urban people's communes, government organs, people's organizations, and schools are all paying attention to the development and elevation of nurseries. Since 1960, and particularly during the last month, we have seen the new situation of great development and great elevation in the enterprises for the protection and education of children. We believe this situation will continue to expand and develop penetratingly.

We hope that all those engaged in the protection and education of children, all comrades connected with problems affected children of pre-school age, and all mothers will strive to study Marxism-

Leninism and the works of Chairman Mao. Let them arm themselves with the Thought of Mao Tse-tung, raise high the three red banners of the general line, the big leap forward and the people's commune and struggle for the training of the children of China into the new generation that will take over the cause of Communism!



MIDDLE AND PRIMARY SCHOOL TEXTBOOKS

MUST BE REFORMED

✓ The following is a full translation of a speech by YEH Sheng-tao to the Second Session of the Second National People's Congress in Communist China as published in Jen-min Jih-pao, Peiping, 14 April 1960, page 12.7

I sincerely support the reports by Vice Premier Li Fu-chun, Vice Premier Li Hsien-nien and Vice Premier T'an Chen-lin. After listening to these three reports, we see before us a moving picture of the great leap forward in all its greatness and splendor. The people of all China, the people of our fraternal nations and all the peace loving and progress seeking people of the whole world must be greatly moved into applause and joy.

The continuous leap forward of our socialist economy not only urgently demands more red and expert construction personnel, but also urgently demands the rapid elevation of the cultural and scientific levels of the people. Education is a constituent portion of the superstructure. When the economic base is changed, educational enterprises must be correspondingly reformed if they are to serve the base properly.

In 1958 the Central Committee of the Party and the State Council jointly issued a directive on education, pointed out that "the Party's educational policy is to make education serve proletarian politics, and to combine education with productive labor.

For the realization of this policy, educational work must be led by the Party."

With the thorough implementation of the Party's policy on educational work, a high tide in the educational revolution came into being in China, the bourgeois educational ideology was criticized, and the direction along which education was to develop was clarified. The quality of teaching was raised and educational enterprises in China leaped forward and saw great development along the path of the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism and the educational views of Chairman Mao.

In the midst of this high tide of the educational revolution, middle and primary school education registered colossal achievements. But there had been no time for the reform of the contents of teaching, which lagged behind the needs of the development of the general situation. Thus the thorough reform of textbooks for middle and primary schools has become an important current task for the further penetration of the educational revolution.

During the past few years, with the development of the country's political and economic situation, continual improvements have been made to the contents of the textbooks for middle and primary schools. Particularly since 1958, considerable work has been carried out in the implementation of the educational policy and measures of the Party. The political and ideological themes have been strengthened, closer combination has been carried out with productive labor, and quality has been definitely raised.

At the same time, supplies were made available in good time. All this played an active role in the development of middle and primary school education. However, improvement carried out so far has not been thorough, and there are still serious defects which affect the quantity, speed, quality and economy of achievements.

#### Present Textbooks Shallow, Repetitious and Complex

The ideological treatment of some textbooks is still inadequate, and they cannot be effectively used for the political and ideological education of the students. Take for example the history textbook for senior middle schools. It describes the society of the days of emperor Wen Ti of the Su Dynasty as a scene of general prosperity. It says that at the time, "on the two banks of the Yellow River on the road to Ch'ang-an, an endless stream of carriages flows day and night, consisting of vehicles bringing grain, silk and cloth to the government," and that the granaries in many areas "were filled with grain, some as much as ten million shih, and the lesser ones also with millions of shih." But the book makes no exposure of Su Wen Ti's exploitation and oppression of the peasants. This is an example of the failure to use the class viewpoint in the analysis of an historical situation.

The contents of some textbooks are antiquated and backward, and they do not fully reflect the daily and monthly different achievements in production and construction in China, and the development levels of modern science and technique, so that they do not catch up with the needs of socialist construction. For

example, the basic contents of mathematical textbooks still remain at the level of the 17th and 18th centuries, and the geometry section is basically the geometrical system of Euclid of 2,000 years ago. Certain contents of the textbooks for physics and chemistry remain at the 19th century levels, and either say too little on, or make no mention of all of, the practical and most recent scientific and technical achievements of great bearing on modern production, such as radio, atomic energy, and rare elements.

Of course we do not advocate the abandonment of all ancient knowledge. Chairman Mao has long since pointed out, "We must absorb everything that can be used today." But it is surely a mistake to remain at the level of several centuries previously, to be satisfied with old things, and to fail in the timely reform of the old systems and add new contents in accordance with the realities of the development of the socialist economy and the new achievements in science and technique. The result of such a course must lead to our being divorced from production, and being divorced from realities.

The contents of some textbooks are too shallow, and lag behind the development of the mental power of the students. Take arithmetic for primary schools. During the first term in the first primary school year, the students are taught only addition and subtraction up to 20, whereas in reality a first grade student can count up to several hundred. In the language textbooks of the lower grades of the primary school, the phonetic alphabet has not

bee used to accelerate the process of identifying characters and reading. As a result, the number of characters recognized is too small, and the texts are too simple. During the first two years the student acquires a vocabulary of only over 1,300 characters, and it is not until he reaches grade three that he starts to write composition.

The contents of some textbooks are repetitive and complex. For example, take the history textbooks. From the primary school through the senior middle school, there are three repetitions of events. Take again the integral numbers section of arithmetic for primary school students, and there are seven repetitions of the subjects handled. Moreover, some problems can be easily solved with algebra, but the complex and difficult arithmetical method is used, and the study of arithmetic is thus spread over a long period, fully seven years from the primary school to the junior middle school.

To enable the students to receive instruction more readily and to master the knowledge more easily, it is of course necessary that repetitions be made in the teaching of certain branches of knowledge. But if there are too many repetitions, we shall be duplicating excessively, and this will lead to waste.

As to the complex and petty nature of the textbooks, we may cite examples in mathematics and physics where certain laws and formulas are comparatively simple and do not call for the excessive attention as is given in the text books, which also lead to waste.

If we remove the defects of shallowness, antiquity, repetition, and complexity, we shall economize teaching time considerably. Take arithmetic, which now is studied over seven years from the primary school to the middle school. It is estimated that the course can be finished in four years within the primary school. According to preliminary investigations, we can economize more than 1,000 class-hours in the language, mathematics, history, geography, physics, biology and chemistry courses in the middle school.

The basic reason contributing to the above mentioned defects is that in the compilation of textbooks, the remnants of bourgeois educational ideology were exerting their influence. First of all, education was isolated, with the slogan of "education for education" without the full realization of the goal of proletarian education which is the fostering of people with Communist awakening and moral character, and with cultural and scientific knowledge developed to a high level, to engage in the building of the great socialist and Communist society.

Our textbooks must be based on this goal, resolutely implement the Party's educational policy, be closely combined with production and closely combined with politics, for the rapid elevation of the political awakening and cultural and scientific levels of the people. Those who were influenced by the bourgeois educational ideology could not see this goal clearly and so committed the mistakes of neglecting politics and failing to

effect the adequate combination with production and realities.

Furthermore, when one holds the bourgeois ideology of "education for the sake of education," he cannot grasp tightly the proletarian educational goal. He will one-sidedly stress book knowledge, and hold that the more book knowledge the better, not bothering to see if it is antiquated and backward, not bothering to see if it is needed, treating every item as "basic knowledge," and teaching everything to the students. Thus the contents of the textbooks are antiquated and complex and do not meet practical needs.

With reference to the principles of pedagogy, the bourgeois educational ideology does not have a correct understanding of the children's capacity for reception, holding that the development of a student's mental capacity is decided only by biological reasons and is not related to the development of society as a whole. They do not understand that under the socialist system, with the flying development of modern science and technique, the ideological realm is continually expanded. They underestimate the students' capacity for reception, thinking that they are not in the position to accept this or that, so that after explaining the lesson, they would repeat it time and again lest the students could not digest it the first time. This also led to duplication and shallowness in the contents of the textbooks.

The bourgeois educational ideology is diametrically opposed to the proletarian educational ideology. Though we have only the remnants of bourgeois ideology, they still constitute the basic

reason for the failure to achieve quantity, speed, quality and economy. Moreover these remanant influences often disturb the minds of the people and present a very serious threat to the people's educational enterprises. So we must resolutely develop a class struggle in the realm of educational ideology, to wipe out bourgeois educational ideology, break down superstition, achieve ideological liberation, and develop the Communist character of daring to think, to speak and to act. Only then shall we succeed in the compilation of brand new textbooks which are in keeping with this great age of ours.

Reform of Textbooks with Thought of Mao Tse-tung  
as Guide

We deeply realize that to thoroughly reform the contents of textbooks, thoroughly implement the spirit of the Party's general line, and achieve quantity, speed, quality and economy, we must let politics assume command, and make the Thought of Mao Tse-tung our guide. The Thought of Mao Tse-tung, which combines the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete practice of the revolution and reconstruction in China, is the basic guarantee for victory in all our revolutionary tasks.

In the compilation of textbooks, we must correctly implement the Party's policies and measures, and correctly realize that our goal is to train the younger generation into workers with socialist awakening, with cultural accomplishment. This goal points to the direction to be followed in the compilation of textbooks. By letting



politics assume command, we first exercise a tight grip over this course to be followed. We definitely cannot allow the textbooks to be treated simply as collections of knowledge, and much less can we consider the compilation of textbooks as a purely technical job. If we do so, we shall lose our sense of direction. As Chairman Mao said, "One without the correct political viewpoint is like one without a soul."

In letting politics assume command, we must use the proletarian standpoint, viewpoint and method in the description of the phenomena of society and the phenomena of nature. Only thus may we overcome the metaphysical viewpoint in the textbooks, and augment the political and ideological character of the textbooks. Only such books will facilitate the students in recognizing the path to progress and make them capable of carrying out self-consciously the struggle against various forms of bourgeois ideology. Only such books will facilitate their acquisition of the dialectic materialist world outlook and Communist moral character.

At the same time, we realize that in order to achieve quantity, speed, quality and economy in the contents of the textbooks, we also have to pay attention to the following points:

(1) To satisfy the needs of socialist economic construction in China, we must add to the contents of the textbooks scientific and technical knowledge needed for modern production and that newly developed. Modern science and technique are developing at a flying speed, we have entered the stage of space travel, and we must catch

up with the world's advanced levels in science and technique. What people have, we must also have; and what people do not have, we must have also. We must therefore make our younger generation master the most modern scientific and technical knowledge and during the stage of primary and middle school education, we should lay the foundation firmly for the students.

At the same time, scientific and technical knowledge is also urgently needed for the promotion of technical reform and the technological revolution to accelerate the socialist revolution and construction in China. When the students have mastered scientific and technical knowledge, they are better qualified for continued studies and for various types of productive labor. Thus we may appropriately consider the instruction, in the relevant course of study, of such subjects as atomic energy, semi-conductors, rare elements, as well as differential calculus, integral calculus, radio, meteorology and hydrology.

People often hold that the textbooks must be stabilized. We do not think stability necessary, but that it is relative. Society develops forward incessantly, and when the economic base of society undergoes a change, education which is a part of the superstructure must be correspondingly changed. The development of science and technique is also limitless. What is considered as higher knowledge will sometime later become common knowledge shared by all. So we cannot have textbooks which are immutable. Stability can only be relative and it is absolutely necessary that we continually

revise or rewrite the textbooks with the development of the objective situation.

(2) We must have a correct estimation of the development of the mental capacity of our students, and the contents of our textbooks must be raised to a higher level. Experiments in many schools have proved that the students' capacity for reception is higher than our previous estimates. For example, in Hei-shan Hsien, Liaoning Province, the Pei-kuan Primary School used only five weeks to complete the teaching of Book One of the Language Reader intended for study over the whole school term. There are many such examples which I shall not mention.

Facts fully prove that the students are fully capable of taking up the appropriately raised contents of textbooks. When the contents are too simple, they do not meet the students' thirst after knowledge, and cannot develop their activism. When the contents are raised to a higher level, the students will learn more and more quickly, and also learn better.

(3) We must delete the antiquated, duplicated and complex portions. Human knowledge accumulates, and the new is necessarily more voluminous than the old. If the load of the students is not increased, we have to delete useless old knowledge if we are to add useful new knowledge. For example, in physics, we should delete such items of classical physics as are unnecessary or only of secondary importance, so that we may add items in modern physics. To avoid duplication, we must also delete unnecessary repetitions.

of treatment. In history, for example, we may delete the three repetitions now found in the textbooks. In the integral numbers section of arithmetic in primary school textbooks, the existing seven repetitions may also be appropriately reduced. In this way the contents of the textbooks will really be the essence of knowledge in the different branches, and the students will be able to acquire in less time more knowledge that is needed.

(4) We must resolutely break up the framework of the old system of textbooks. These old frames do not comply with the spirit for quantity, speed, quality and economy and can only be obstacles to the reform of textbooks. They must be broken up. The revolution is the breaking up of old frames. For example, Euclid's geometric system must be broken up, but of course we must continue to teach those portions which are still useful. In arithmetic in the primary schools, in the former textbooks the four elementary operations are distinctly separated from algebra, but now this frame must be broken up, and algebra must be introduced into arithmetic, which will lead to more and quicker results.

Again, in geography, the former textbooks maintained separate courses for physical geography and economic geography. This frame must also be broken up, and in accordance with teaching needs, we must combine knowledge of physical geography with knowledge of economic geography. In this way we may establish new systems of study courses in the spirit of achieving quantity, speed, quality and economy. We still lack

experience in the creation of new systems of study courses, and it is hoped that different areas will fully develop their revolutionary zeal and actively create such experience.

We believe that we can appropriately reduce the duration of primary and middle school education, appropriately raise its level of accomplishment, appropriately increase labor activity, and achieve quantity, speed, quality and economy so long as we delete the conditions in existing textbooks that contribute to lack of quantity, slowness, inferior quality and non-economy, and compile new textbooks in the spirit of achieving quantity, speed, quality and economy, and at the same time adopt suitable supplementary measures in other fields.

Like other activities, the reform of textbooks must be carried out under the leadership of the Party, with the resolute persuasion of the mass line and the thorough implementation of the policy of walking on two legs. China is a large country with a population of 650 million, a great expanse of territory, and conditions in different areas vary. And so, under the unified requirement of unanimity of goals and unanimity of policies, we may flexibly compile many kinds and sets of textbooks.

As a matter of fact, since 1958, the Party's policy of walking on two legs has already been carried to the work of the compilation of textbooks and results have been achieved. The Ministry of Education of the Central Government can undertake the compilation work, while the local authorities may also do so.

Considerable amounts of textbooks have been compiled in various localities and considerable experience has been accumulated. Generally speaking, these new textbooks all attach importance to the combination of education with politics, with production and with realities. Some of these new textbooks have broken up the antiquated systems of courses and reduced teaching time. Others have added new achievements in modern science and technique, and strengthened experiments and field work. Still others reduced repetitions and avoided duplication.

The good experiences in these local efforts at the compilation of textbooks will doubtless play a great role in pushing forward the reform of textbooks. In the future all localities will continue to create more experiences in this field, produce more textbooks and make greater achievements.

The thorough reform of textbooks is a gigantic and glorious task. Under the leadership of the Party, we have full confidence in fulfilling this task within a comparatively short period.

FOR REASONS OF SPEED AND ECONOMY  
THIS REPORT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED  
ELECTRONICALLY DIRECTLY FROM OUR  
CONTRACTOR'S TYPESCRIPT

THIS PUBLICATION WAS PREPARED UNDER CONTRACT TO THE  
UNITED STATES JOINT PUBLICATIONS RESEARCH SERVICE  
A FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION ESTABLISHED  
TO SERVICE THE TRANSLATION AND RESEARCH NEEDS  
OF THE VARIOUS GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS